Application No.: 09/554,733 Docket No.: 22135-00005-US

REMARKS

Receipt of the Office Action mailed December 28, 2004 is acknowledged. Reconsideration of the outstanding rejection is respectfully requested in view of the following comments.

Claims 1-5 were rejected over WO 97/42259 to Chevalier et al as set forth in the previous office action. This rejection is respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

The Examiner contends that Chevalier et al teaches that the sponge cloth density can vary from 20 to 100 kg/m3, and this supposedly establishes density as a results effective variable. Applicants respectfully disagree. Namely, Chevalier teaches a sponge or sponge cloth having a specific structure with macro- and micropores, which has a density of 20 to 100 kg/m^3. To the contrary, Applicants' instantly claimed sponge cloth necessarily has a density of at least 109.6 kg/m ^{3} which is based on cellulose and has been provided with an internal reinforcement. As admitted by the Examiner, the sponge cloth of Chevalier has a density from 20-100, which is below the minimum density recited in claims 1-5.

The Examiner apparently believes that it was recognized in the art at the time the invention that the density of a spongecloth density value was a variable that could be modified by adjusting the amount of poreformer present, as well as the degree of compression of cellulosic dough in a mold for the purpose of providing an optimally durable spongecloth with sufficient lifecycle longevity. However, there is simply no teaching or suggestion by Chevalier to control the amount of pore former in the cellulosic dough in order to achieve a density of the final product of more than 100 kg/m^3. The presently claimed sponge cloth does not require such a specific structure, but in any event has a density above 100 kg/m^3.

In Chevalier's example, aqueous sodium hydroxide solution is employed as solvent for the cellulose. Amine oxides, especially N-methyl-morpholine N-oxide, are disclosed for use solely as a solvent for the cellulose. Thus Chevalier does not employ an amine oxide process as recited in the instant claims 1-5. Indeed, Chevalier teaches that the NMMO process had

previously only been mastered in the production of cellulose fibers (page 4, l. 3-5; see also the equivalent US 6,129,867 at col. 2, l. 64-67).

For all these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that a sponge cloth obtained by the amine oxide process and having the properties as set forth in claim 1 of the present application is therefore not anticipated, nor rendered obvious by Chevalier.

The instant rejection is now believed to be overcome and should be withdrawn. The Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the office of the undersigned attorney of record to discuss this case if that would expedite prosecution.

Finally, please confirm that the „°C" has not been correctly converted in paragraphs 00016 and 00026 of the present specification.

In view of the above remarks, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 22-0185, under Order No. 22135-00005-US from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: March 28, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

By 44,100
Susan B. Shaw McBee
For Registration No.: 39,294
CONNOLLY BOVE LODGE & HUTZ LLP
1990 M Street, N.W., Suite 800
Washington, DC 20036-3425
(202) 331-7111
(202) 293-6229 (Fax)
Attorney for Applicant